

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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S E C R E T BOGOTA 10243

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS CO

SUBJ: CONFLICTING REPORTS ON NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (ELN)

SURRENDER

1. THE BOGOTA PRESS ON NOV 18 AND 19 HAS PRINTED A NUMBER OF CONTRADICTORY REPORTS CONCERNING THE SURRENDER OF GUERRILLA LEADER FABIO VASQUEZ AND 250 FOLLOWERS, AND OF GUARANTEES ALLEGEDLY OFFERED BY THE GOC.

2. SENSATIONALIST AFTERNOON TABLOID EL BOGOTANO REPORTED ON NOVEMBER 18 THAT VASQUEZ HAD SURRENDERED TO TROOPS OF THE 2ND BRIGADE, BASED IN BARRANQUILLA.

3. EL ESPECTADOR, IN A NOVEMBER 19 FRONT PAGE STORY, REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNOR OF BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT ALVARO ESCALLON VILLA AND PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR JAIME CASTRO, HAD IN COOPERATION WITH A GROUP INCLUDING STUDENTS AT CARTAGENA UNIVERSITY, ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND ARRANGED FOR THREE GROUPS TOTALING 250 PERSONS TO TURN THEMSELVES INTO THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT.

4. ON THE SAME PAGE OF EL ESPECTADOR, DEFMIN ABRAHAM VARON VALENCIA IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY RUMORS,

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THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO SURRENDER AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT

IN NEGOTIATION WITH THE GUERRILLAS.

5. EL TIEMPO, ON NOV 19 STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SURRENDER OR GOVT CONTACT WITH THE GUERRILLAS. THE ARTICLE INCLUDED A DENIAL OF THE GUERRILLA STORY BY BOLIVAR GOVERNOR ESCALLON VILLA (SEE PARA 3).

6. THE FLURRY OF CONTRADICTORY REPORTS ON AN ELN SURRENDER MAY BE A BY-PRODUCT OF THE FAILURE OF THE COLOMBIAN/VENEZUELAN/COSTA RICAN INITIATIVE AT QUITO. SEVERAL OFFICES OF EMBASSY HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS THAT THE GOC HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONDITIONAL SURRENDER OF THE ELN FOLLOWING THE LIFTING OF THE CUBAN SANCTIONS. SINCE THE ADMINISTRATION HAD BEEN NEARLY CERTAIN OF SUCCESS AT QUITO, IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ELN, IF THEY HAD TAKEN PLACE, HAD REACHED AN ADVANCED STAGE, ONLY TO BE HELD UP, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, BY THE UNEXPECTED SETBACK OF THE MINISTERIAL DECISION.
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